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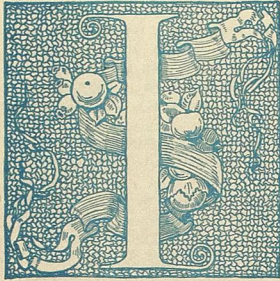
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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

PROGRESSIVE LESSONS FOR BEGINNERS IN CHINA PAINTING.

By EMMA HAYWOOD.



Is china painting difficult? This is a question frequently asked by those who are anxious to devote their leisure moments to the pursuit of some kind of artistic work within the moderate powers of the general run of amateurs, who cannot command either time or opportunity for serious study.

We can confidently assure these aspirants that if the simplest methods be adopted the decoration of china, at once pleasing and useful, is

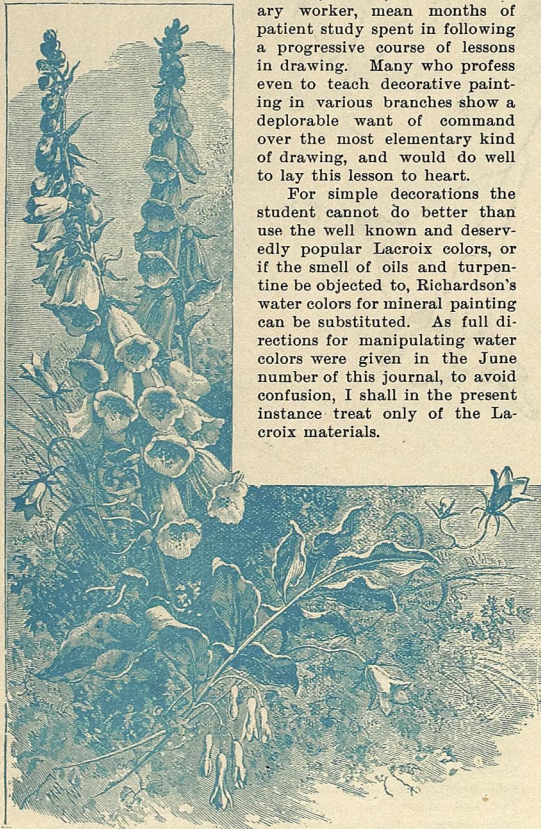
by no means so difficult as might be supposed, even when very little artistic training is brought to bear on the work. I propose to give the very plainest and most minute directions to my pupils, taking for granted that they know absolutely nothing of the subject under consideration. Charming designs in great variety adaptable to the purpose are so frequently given in the DECORATOR AND FURNISHER that there need be no trouble on that score for practice, unless, indeed, colored studies are preferred, in which case nothing is easier than to obtain such from any of the best stores where artists' materials are sold.

As a general rule, unless very sure you are able to draw well, it is far better to trace and transfer the outline of the design rather than run the risk of faulty draughtsmanship, for no matter how excellent the painting may be all artistic feeling will be lost if the drawing is bad.

There are those who foolishly assert that in the interest of art a teacher has no right to advocate such a method of working. This is obviously absurd where the object in view is merely the best possible reproduction of a well chosen subject. To be able to copy the simplest design freehand with ease and

accuracy would, for the ordinary worker, mean months of patient study spent in following a progressive course of lessons in drawing. Many who profess even to teach decorative painting in various branches show a deplorable want of command over the most elementary kind of drawing, and would do well to lay this lesson to heart.

For simple decorations the student cannot do better than use the well known and deservedly popular Lacroix colors, or if the smell of oils and turpentine be objected to, Richardson's water colors for mineral painting can be substituted. As full directions for manipulating water colors were given in the June number of this journal, to avoid confusion, I shall in the present instance treat only of the Lacroix materials.



The requisites for a beginner are not very numerous. They are as follows: A selection of colors, these come moist in tubes ready for use. A few camel-hair brushes, one or two six-inch tiles, some spirits of turpentine, a small bottle of tinting oil, and a hand rest of the kind made by raising a flat piece of wood about an inch and a half broad and eighteen inches long by means of wooden feet two inches high placed at either end.

The first consideration will be the choice of a piece of china for your first experiment and a design wherewith to decorate it, both must be of the simplest kind so that the difficulties of handling the colors may be reduced to minimum.

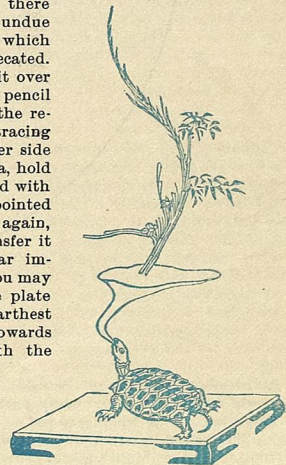
I should therefore recommend a flat surface such as that presented by a fruit, card or cake plate. The accompanying illustration will serve for our model, and in working it out the beginner will doubtless find it very helpful in making my meaning clear.

French china is very reliable and pleasant to paint on. See that the surface is well glazed and as free from flaws of any kind as possible. Trace the design neatly and accurately by the aid of tracing paper, then after making sure that the plate is scrupulously clean, take a piece of soft old rag and wipe it all over with a little turpentine, then rub it dry with a fresh rag. If you omit to do this you will find it extremely difficult to transfer the design, for the action of the turpentine enables you to work easily on the glazed surface of the china. You can prove this by trying to write with a lead pencil on any piece of glazed china before applying the turpentine when hardly a stroke will show, but after the application of the turpentine it is as easy to make an impression as though writing on paper.

There are many ways of transferring the design with about equal claims to success, if properly managed, as far as securing the design is concerned. One will suffice however, and although it will perhaps take up a little longer time in execution than others, there will be no fear of smudging or undue strength of outline, both of which casualties are to be deprecated. After tracing the design turn it over and with a medium soft lead pencil go over the whole outline on the reverse side. Now place the tracing paper thus marked on the under side in proper position on the china, hold it firmly with the left hand, and with a bone tracer or any blunt pointed instrument go over the design again, using sufficient pressure to transfer it clearly. A very delicate, clear impression will be the result. You may now begin to paint. Place the plate on a table, raising the edge farthest from you so that it inclines towards you, then bridge it over with the hand-rest already described.

The few colors required for this study are as follows: Carmine No. 1, red-brown, ivory-yellow, ultramarine blue, apple-green, brown-green and dark green No. 7.

You will notice that in mineral painting it is necessary to use the greens ready mixed; if you attempt to make them by mixing blue and yellow as in ordinary water color painting the result, after firing, will be found extremely disappointing. The bloom of the bigonia, here depicted, is a beautiful salmon pink. To obtain the desired shade, put out on a six-inch glazed tile, which serves for a palette, some carmine No. 1 and a very little



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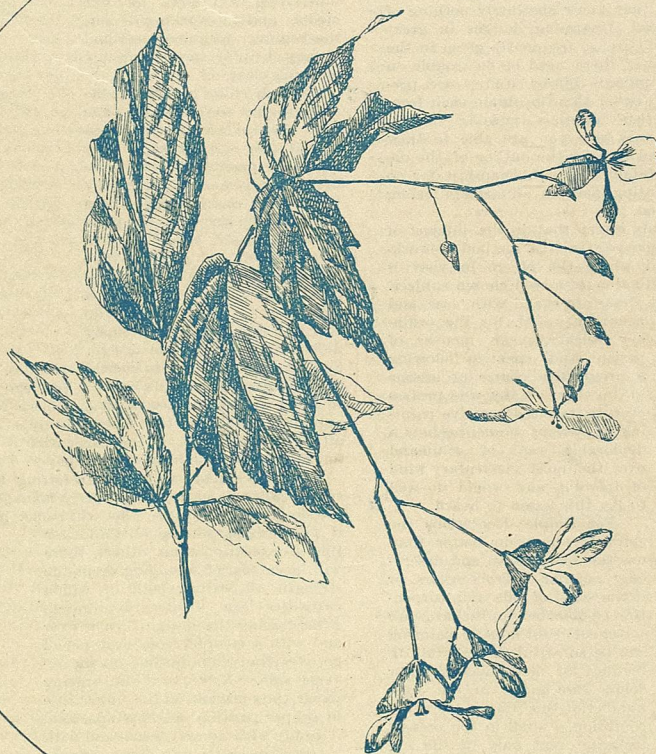
ivory-yellow. Take a medium sized round camel's hair brush with not too fine a point, and mix a mere suspicion of yellow with the carmine, this gives the desired salmon colored tinge, but it must be borne in mind that all yellows have a tendency to fire up rather stronger than they are painted. Remember also that the carmines do not come to their beautiful bright hue until they have passed through the kiln, but look when first painted somewhat dull and low in tone. A little experience will soon teach you to value the colors rightly when painting so that they fire as you intend them to. After all there is not so much difference before and after firing as the inexperienced are apt to imagine unless the colors are improperly handled, as for instance attempting to mix greens instead of using those already prepared.

Having mixed your tint, just dip the point of your brush in turpentine, which should be placed in a little vessel handy, and by this means thin your tint slightly by thoroughly working the

for the foliage, these must of course be varied a little, or the finished painting will look tame and monotonous. Greens especially require painting thinly in the first instance or they will not assimilate properly with the glaze on the china when subjected to the heat necessary to fuse them.

Squeeze from the tube some apple-green, ultramarine blue and ivory-yellow. Just add one drop of tinting oil to the apple-green to thin it a little, and incorporate the oil well with the color by the aid of a palette knife, then separate the mixture into three parts. To one part add a little yellow, to another a touch of ultramarine blue, leaving the third pure. Now take a fair sized flat end brush, which is always best for broad sweeping strokes such as are necessary in the present case.

Do not misunderstand me and try to work with a flat brush. The brush should be round and full, with a flat in-



brush about in some of the color, then pass the brush thus filled freely and lightly over every part of the flowers, including the calyx and stems which are red.

The chief trouble at first will arise from the absence of tooth on the highly glazed surface so that there seems to be nothing for the brush to take hold of, and the paint will therefore be apt to slip up. If you keep your brush well charged and handle it with a certain amount of decision you will soon acquire the knack of laying the color deftly and evenly. Do not go over any part a second time while the color is wet, because you can easily touch up and retouch any number of times always provided that you allow the previous painting to dry first. The colors are not long in drying sufficiently to paint over them.

While the pink is drying proceed to lay in the first tones

stead of a pointed end. Dip the brush in turpentine and dab it on a cloth so that it is only dampened not wet with turpentine, then charge it generously with the apple-green mixed with yellow. Commence with the top leaf nearest the flowers, start from the pointed end and draw the brush from the outside edge to the center vein with each successive stroke, when one side is finished start from the top on the other side and repeat the process. By manipulating the color in this way the brush marks will help to give the feeling and form of of the leaves. For the small leaf partly hidden by the one just painted use the apple green mixed with ultramarine blue. For the lower leaf springing from the same base, take pure apple-green. For the large leaves use two tints in one leaf, dividing them by the center line, vary the tints throughout,

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but be careful to rinse the brush in turpentine and dab it on the cloth before starting with a fresh shade or there will be danger of the tints losing their distinctiveness.

The flowers should now be ready for retouching. Shade the petals in the lighter parts with the same pink already used, leaving the first painting to do duty for the high lights. Add a little more carmine before going over the buds and calyx, pass this color also over the main stem from which the leaves spring, since all the stems are red in this variety of bigonia. Shade with light strokes, being careful that the brush is well filled with color, but not so moist as for the first painting; if you fetch the color up in places, which you are quite likely to do until more experienced, do not try to go over or correct it until dry, for you will in that case surely do more harm than good. For a third painting, pass a little red-brown over the darkest parts of the calyx and buds, and also accentuate the stalks with it. Then with a fine outlining brush go over the whole outline of the flowers with the same color, taking care that the line is very delicate and correct in drawing.

For decorative work in this and similar designs a conventional outline is necessary to give solidity and character to the work.

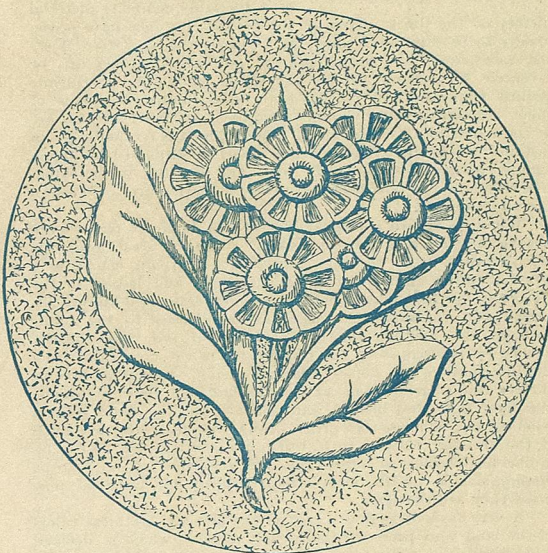
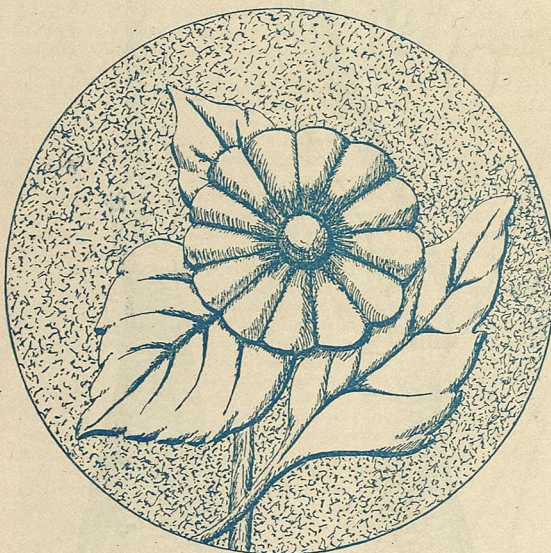
The leaves must now be shaded and, as their treatment is broad, a brush of the same kind as first recommended for them only a little smaller should be used. The high lights are already supplied with the first tint; for the next tone shade with the same tints already prepared only reverse them, that is where the ground is of the yellow tint shade with the blue tint, and *vice versa*. A beautiful varied effect is thus gained. For the darker tones shade with brown-green, and for the darkest of all

time be especially bad in parts the color can be taken off with turpentine and the faulty parts repaired. Once fired the color cannot be removed, until then it can be wiped out any number of times. When fired, if apparently more finished in some parts than in others or not strong enough in tone, the work can be retouched with the same colors as before where necessary and then fired again, but for such a piece of decoration one painting should be all-sufficient. The shape of the plate given is pretty and novel, it comes in French china, and the price is about fifty cents. The design however would look equally well on an ordinary round plate.

DECORATIVE DESIGNING.



WHAT is decorative designing? There is much direct and much unmixt imitation in the decorative work of the day, but in its highest form decorative designing is a creative art whether in dealing with abstract ornament or natural ornament. Its aim being to produce the beautiful in form and color, nature, in reference to it, is merely suggestive. It starts with certain requirements to be met, such as the securing of adaptation and general harmony under which all natural types demand modification. If the type pertains to plants distinguishing characteristics are to be presented, obtained from the combination of those of different specimens, certain details omitted and accessories to be introduced. In colors the decorative artist finds himself constantly confronting illusions, for not only according to shadows and transient light are these different to the eye than what they really are, but they



NUT PLATE IN BRASS REPOUSSÉE, BY LILY MARSHALL.

use dark green No. 7. The leaves must be painted just a little stronger in color than intended to be when finished as they will fire out slightly. In shading follow always the feeling of the leaf, starting from the lights towards the indentations. The shading can be retouched until satisfactory, always allowing each painting to dry first. If in a hurry to go on, the plate can be held over a spirit lamp to facilitate the drying. Last of all outline and vein the leaves with red-brown.

Be particular when engaged on decorating china that no dust is flying about as it will mar the beauty of the work, for this reason also put the plate away when finished where no dust can settle on it, and allow at least twenty-four hours to elapse before packing it to send away for firing. It is well when practicable to subject the work to a gentle heat in order to thoroughly harden the colors. The heat from a radiator is excellent. Too much heat will destroy the properties of the vehicles used in the preparation of the paints for the purpose of fusing them properly when in the kiln.

The plate should be edged with gold, this can usually be done, if you so direct, at the places where china is fired. Later on I propose to give instructions for gilding, but in the beginning it is not wise to risk spoiling your first works by attempting too much. It will be my endeavor to make my lessons progressive so that each time a little more useful knowledge may be gained.

It may be well to mention that should the painting at any

are affected by their relations to other colored objects in their vicinity. What are actually strong greens and reds have under such influences, their tones, at times, best rendered by such pigments as umber and blue, burnt sienna and madder. What appears to be scarlet may be merely maroon. It is interesting to note what slight modifications will result in perfect beauty of decoration. The decorative designer has to note and put to account the peculiar beauty of outline in flowers and leaves, the diversity of lines and curves, the order of arrangement in plants, the conformity of part with part, and, for instance, in buds, the evolutions of leaves that bind their several members. These are analyzed, combined by fancy or imagination, aided by force of reasoning on the application of accepted principles, for the methods of decorative art have not to be invented. In conventional treatment the decorative designer decides whether to introduce types as directly derived, so simplified as to suit the exigencies of position. Then there is ornament which is irregular whilst more or less naturalistic. Without unduly magnifying the office of the decorative designer, it is evident he occupies a position which it requires no little artistic knowledge fully to appreciate, a knowledge not necessarily involved in mere gratification at the results of his work. He has to search out and find out how forms in nature are composed, how broken into wavy masses of light and shade; to ascertain in plants the proportion of stem to foliage, and the bearing of angles and corners of branches to stems, recognizing the harmony that prevails, this harmony be-